

buy weapons to kill our young men and women.

If I could advise Mr. Romney and Mr. Obama, I would say: Listen to the American people on our policy in Afghanistan, because the American people want our troops home. I hear both sides complaining about the debt, the cliffs, sequestration, and all these things. And yet we're spending \$10 billion a month in Afghanistan. And, as "Funding the Enemy" says, we can't even account for most of it. Yet we're going to cut programs here for children and senior citizens. But no, we don't even debate Afghanistan on the floor of the House. That is the tragedy.

Just a few of us on both sides have been speaking out constantly on the failed policy in Afghanistan. The former commandant who has been my adviser for 3 years—I'm not at liberty to say his name for the RECORD—he has said to me:

What do we say to the mother, the father, the wife of the last marine or soldier killed to support a corrupt government and a corrupt leader in a war that cannot be won?

Congress needs to awaken to the fact that we need to bring our troops home in 2013—the spring of 2013 and not the end of 2014.

Madam Speaker, next week I will go to Walter Reed. I will visit the wounded from Afghanistan, some from Iraq. And I will leave with a heavy heart because I will see the broken bodies. I will see the young men and some women that have lost legs, other parts of their bodies, some paralyzed from the waist down, some with burned faces. And yet the Congress sleeps through this war. I ask my friend on both sides, when we get back in November, let's pass a resolution saying that we need to bring our troops home in 2013.

Madam Speaker, before closing, I've signed over 10,855 letters to families and extended families in America because of my weakness and my mistake on Iraq, a war that never had to be fought. Look at Iraq today. It's falling apart. It's time for us to stop trying to build empires and to rebuild America.

ISSUES FACING THIS CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Madam Speaker, Republicans have pursued an obstructionist agenda since taking control of this body, cynically willing, seemingly, to risk even harm to our economy for political gain. The refusal of House Republicans to even consider compromise has resulted in the 112th Congress becoming among the least productive Congresses ever. The 112th Congress looks like a Potemkin Congress when it comes to measured productivity.

Consider the most simple, straightforward metric: the number of laws passed per Congress. The legislative output of this Congress, a mere 173

public laws passed, is a pittance when compared to the 900 public laws passed by what was called the do-nothing Congress of the Truman era, or the 333 public laws passed in an era of divided government in the 104th Congress.

□ 1020

Or consider one of our most fundamental constitutional responsibilities, funding the government. Once again, the 112th Congress distinguishes itself for sheer incompetence, having managed to pass zero appropriations bills. The 112th Congress looks even worse when directly compared to the Democratic-led 111th Congress, which boasted a productivity level on par with the legislative records during the era of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Lyndon Baines Johnson in the thirties and sixties, respectively.

The landmark legislation enacted in the 2-year period between 2009 and 2010, from the Recovery Act, the health reform bill, financial regulation, put the meager output of this current Congress to shame.

Further, beyond these big three, at least a dozen other important bills were passed during that time period, including legislation addressing fair pay, student loans, consumer protection, national service, stem cell research, and food safety.

The American people are tired of business as usual. They are tired of Congress waiting until the last possible moment to avert yet another disaster. They are certainly tired of this House returning from a 37-day summer vacation only to hold a couple of show votes this week before rushing Members out of town again next week, leaving in their wake a sea of critical work that remains undone.

Our country faces serious, daunting challenges that demand action now, which is why I advocated canceling the August recess.

The House now has an opportunity to take decisive action in the coming days on at least two major deadline issues facing Congress: passing a 5-year farm bill and enacting comprehensive postal reform.

Despite the 112th Congress being among the least productive and the most dysfunctional in history, the Senate, not known for its speed, has managed to engage in constructive cooperation and addresses both of these issues in an overwhelmingly bipartisan manner.

On two of the most urgent matters facing this Congress, the Senate has exposed the extreme intransigence of this House Republican majority. Two Republicans, a Democrat, and an Independent, developed the 21st Century Postal Service Act of 2012 which passed the Senate with overwhelming bipartisan support.

On the vital 5-year reauthorization of the farm bill, the Senate again developed a reform bill, the Agriculture Reform, Food, and Jobs Act of 2012, and also passed it with a bipartisan supermajority.

Compromise is at the heart of these bipartisan measures, which are far from perfect and contain provisions I would oppose. However, both bills contain provisions vital to saving the postal service, safeguarding the health of Americans and the American agricultural industry, and providing a critical safety net for American families.

In my perfect world, we would pass my Reform the Postal Service for the 21st Century Act. And I'm sure in the House Republicans' perfect world, we'd pass their House Postal Reform Act of 2011. But in the real world, I do not believe either of our constituents sent us here to stubbornly fight for the partisan perfect at the expense of the American good.

If Republican leadership are willing to compromise on behalf of the American people, they will take up and pass the bipartisan bills, S. 1679 and S. 3240, this week or next. I realize I risk appearing naive for even proposing compromise by taking up and passing Senate bills. But my own experience with my predecessor in the 11th District of Virginia gives me hope.

As many of my colleagues are aware, even though former Congressman Tom Davis is a Republican and I'm a Democrat, we get together and we like to say that we belong to the same political party—the party of getting things done. We have roots in local government and that's the ethos of local government, and I appreciate his generosity in working with me in the transition to the 111th Congress.

I recall one extended transition meeting at a local Denny's. We were talking. There was a waitress that was going back and forth. We kind of thought she would recognize us, maybe want to say "hello." In fact, she said, "You need to move on. I need that table."

That's where the American people are. They want us to move on and get our business done so they can get on with theirs.

FARM BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from South Dakota (Mrs. NOEM) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. NOEM. Madam Speaker, today, I wanted to bring to the attention of my colleagues something that is of utmost importance to this country and our food supply and to this Nation's farmers and ranchers. It is the importance of getting a farm bill done.

Growing up on a farm in South Dakota and then farming for years with my family, I certainly recognize how volatile the agriculture industry is. Our producers invest in seed and fertilizer, they put it in the dirt, and they hope that that fall that they have the opportunity to come back and harvest something that will provide for their family and provide food for this country and for this Nation.

The crops that are grown are relied upon to fulfill the need that we have in